




How do I know how much fish is safe to eat?

Follow the South Carolina Fish Consumption Advisories by:

- Visiting DHEC's Fish Consumption Advisory Web site at www.scdhec.gov/fish.
- Call DHEC's Fish Advisory Hotline at 1-888-849-7241 (toll-free).
- Order a free booklet online (www.scdhec.gov/fish) or call DHEC's Materials Library at (803) 898-3803.

How can I reduce the health risks of eating fish?

-  Eat smaller fish and species of fish with less mercury, such as salmon and flounder.
-  Follow the Fish Consumption Advisories.
-  Eat fish from lakes and rivers that do not have advisories.

For more information on South Carolina Fish Consumption Advisories, contact

SC DHEC
2600 Bull Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Fish Advisory Hotline
1-888-849-7241 (toll-free)

Fish Advisory Web site
www.scdhec.gov/fish

For more information on fishing, contact

SC DNR
PO Box 167
Columbia, SC 29202
(803) 734-3886
<http://www.dnr.sc.gov>

For information on a free fishing program for youth to earn rewards, visit: <http://screelkids.dnr.sc.gov/>

Fishing is a wonderful way to reconnect with your family and enjoy the outdoors. Don't forget to check the rules and regulations for your area before you go!

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Facts about mercury in fish





Fishing is a fun and relaxing outdoor activity. But some fish caught in South Carolina may contain harmful levels of mercury.

Why should I eat fish?

- It's low in fat and contains omega-3 fatty acids (boosts heart health).
- It's a great source of protein, vitamins, & minerals.
- Eating the right types of fish regularly can reduce your chances of having a heart attack or stroke.

What is mercury?

- Mercury occurs naturally in the environment and is added by man.
- Mercury gets into fish through the plants and animals that they eat.
- Mercury builds up in the protein or meat of the fish (part that we eat).
- Older and larger fish have eaten more and been in the water longer, so there may be more mercury in their bodies.

Health Effects of Mercury

- Your body naturally removes small amounts of mercury.
- If there is too much mercury, your body cannot get rid of it.

Symptoms

- In fetuses and babies
 - Brain damage
 - Blindness
 - Seizures
- In children under 14
 - Digestive problems
 - Kidney damage
 - Problems with their nervous system
- In adults
 - Numbness or tingling in mouth, hands, or feet.
 - Vision or hearing problems



Important Notes:

- Health problems due to mercury in children and fetuses cannot always be corrected.
- All these problems in adults can usually be corrected if a person stops eating fish that contain high levels of mercury.
- If you are concerned about the amount of mercury in your body, see your doctor.

Who is most at Risk?

- Babies
- Children under 14
- Women who may become pregnant
- Women who are nursing
- Women who are pregnant

Note: Persons not included in the above high risk group should follow the advice in the Fish Consumption Advisory booklet and website (www.scdhec.gov/fish).

Why are these groups at a greater risk?

Developing bodies, such as babies and small children, are at a greater risk since their brains and nervous systems are still forming.

What advice should those most at risk follow?

- Do not eat any fish from waterbodies with an advisory (www.scdhec.gov/fish).
- Eat one meal of freshwater fish each week from a waterbody without an advisory.
- Do NOT eat any king mackerel, shark, swordfish, or tilefish.